(c) how many units are closed because of technology failure; and

(d) what steps have been taken by Government for the revival of these units?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) mini cement plants set up in Karnataka State have been reporting cement production to the Office of the Development Commissioner for Cement Industry.

(b) National Council for Cement & Building Materials (NCB) have informed that 18 plants based on CRI-MVSK technology are under operation and two other plants are under advanced stage of implementation.

(c) As per information received by NCB, a few CRI MVSK cement plants were closed for some time or the other. The main reasons were high cost of coke breeze and other inputs resulting in uneconomical operation and in some cases managerial problem. However, no plant based on CRI-MVSK technology has been closed as a result of technology failure and a large number of similar plants based on the same technology are successfully operating in Karnataka and other States.

(d) To improve the economic viability of mini cement plants, the rate of basic excise duty for mini-cement plants operating with vertical shaft kilns with a licensed capacity not exceeding 200 TPD and rotary kiln with licensed capacity not exceeding 300 TPD has been reduced to Rs. 90/- per tonne from Rs. 215 per tonne.

Oil exploration programme in Cauveri basin in Karnataka

812. SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA:
SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any oil exlopration programme has been carried out in the Cauveri Basin in Karnataka;

(b) if so, what are the results thereof and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Onland Karnataka (including the part of Cauvery river basin in the Karnataka State) is a 'shield area' which exposes igneous and metamorphic rocks of pre-Cambrian age. The area is devoid of sedimentary cover which is vital for generation and accumulation of Oil and Natural Gas.

Renovation of Bangalore Air port

813. SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA:
SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) for how long the proposal for renovation of Bangalore Airport is pending with the Ministry; and

(b) by when it is likely to be cleared and work to be commenced?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHD. KHAN): (a) and (b) While no such proposal is pending with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the National Airports Authority are contemplating to modify and expand the existing airport building at Bangalore, in phases, so as to serve the needs of the passengers upto 2005 A.D. The commencement of the project would depend on the acquisition and handing over of adequate and suitable land to the National Airports Authority by the State Government.